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THE DEVELOPMENT OF US STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE

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The following is a translation of an article published in Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal (Military History Journal), No 5, May 1966, pages 49-60.

In American literature dealing with the history of intelligence in the US there is a legend that spying activity is not in keeping with the national character of Americans. Many authors have referred to the fact that when the US entered World War I the opinion was widely entertained that "America never had any spies." In almost all or at least in many research works there is related with unconcealed satisfaction the story of how Henry Stimson, US Secretary of State in 1929, abruptly cut off the official who was reporting to him about the measures being taken in the State Department to break the codes of other countries. He declared: "Gentlemen do not read other people's mail," and he pushed away a pile of telegrams which had been decoded. It seemed in this way that the "black cabinet" had been disbanded. By citing such examples, apologists for US intelligence try to divest American "gentlemen" of their predilection for "dirty" operations.

At the same time an analysis of historical facts shows convincingly that as early as the end of the 19th century, US intelligence was developing into one of the most important elements in the US imperialist government apparatus. It is another matter that in comparison with British and French intelligence services, it came into being much later. In his book, The Craft of Intelligence, which was published in New York at the end of 1963, the former director of CIA, Allen Dulles, describes the development of a professional, peacetime, military intelligence service in the US in the following way: "The first permanent army and navy peacetime intelligence organizations were created in the US in the 1880's. (As far as US Air Force intelligence is concerned, American authors claim that its history dates back to 1907, when in the Office of the Army Chief of Signal Communications a section for "air force" research was formed. However, in view of the fact that military air forces at that time and for a long time after that,